

clined. Hugh Ford, who had been engaged to stage the piece, finally took it in hand and, it is said, whipped it into its present shape during the rehearsals. It is admitted, however, that the dramatic features which have made the play so pronounced a success, were included in the draft supplied by Klein.

But, though the play of "Potash and Perlmutter" bears no man's name as author, it is like the good value which needs no bush. It is a series of incidents, more or less, familiar to the regular theatre-goer, adroitly put together so that the bursts of laughter shall be interrupted at stated occasions by pulls at the heart-strings. It has been proved over and again that whenever this formula is properly staged, the result is inevitable. In "Potash and Perlmutter," it is done with great cleverness, and this makes its success all the more secure.

Everybody who reads current literature at all, knows the two partners, Abe and Mawruss Perlmutter, the two warring friends who make up-to-date garments. In the action of the piece, they are drawn with great truth to life and as they occupy the greater part of the play's action, they are productive of an almost incessant flood of laughter. Their noble qualities are brought prominently to the fore in their efforts to protect the young Russian fugitive who has found a place in their establishment. But, the necessary salvation comes after all the characters concerned in the drama show their best side.

That, in brief, tells the action of the piece. Around it many amusing incidents are gathered, and the love story of Potash's daughter for the refugee, and the romance of Perlmutter for the million-dollar designer are nicely woven in.

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THAT SINGING FOUR

That Singing Four appearing nightly at the Hotel Utah grill featuring a number of the latest song hits, recently returned from a successful tour of the coast. Theirs is the most popular quartette of the kind that has been heard at the grill where they are entertaining the patrons nightly.

### AMBROSE BIERCE IS PROBABLY DEAD

(Continued from Page 10.)

stories. The year 1870 found him in London in the brilliant set of which Tom Hood was leader. There he sent forth such poignant shafts of ridicule of men and institutions as to earn for him the sobriquet of "Bitter Bierce."

On returning to America, Bierce went west. In 1880 he was manager for a mining company in the Black Hills, where he had some desperate adventures with bad men, chiefly highwaymen. Later he was employed as a writer by Frederick Marriott, of the San Francisco News-Letter. Here he was given a free hand, and in his pungent paragraphs he attacked everybody, high and low, and soon made a name for himself all over the

west as the most vitriolic satirist of his day.

When his book *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* was published in the later '80s, it was pounced upon by reviewers, who declared it to be more harrowing than Poe; but at the same time the style was recognized as that of a master. A Son of the Gods, one of the stories in this book, is fairly representative. "A young officer whose division is halted at the edge of a wood, to spare the lives of the skirmishers, rides alone to the crest of a bare ridge to make the enemy disclose himself. He then rides on in a storm of rifle fire.

"The dust drifts away. Incredible! That enchanted horse and rider have passed a ravine and are climbing another slope to unveil another armed host. Another moment and that crest, too, is in eruption. The horse rears and strikes the air with his forefeet. They are down at last. But look again—the man has detached himself from the dead animal. He stands erect, motionless, holding his saber in his right hand, straight above his head. His face is toward us. Now he lowers his hand to a level with his face and moves it outward, the blade of the saber describing a downward curve. It is a sign to us, to the world, to posterity. It is a hero's salute to death and history!

"Again the spell is broken. Our men attempt to cheer; they are choking with emotion; they utter hoarse, discordant cries; they clutch their weapons and press tumultuously forward into the open. The skirmishes, without orders against orders, like hounds unleashed."

In the end, of course, the young hero is slain, but the inspiration of his deed leads his comrades to victory.

In his next volume of tales, *Can Such Things Be?* Bierce appeared as the most distinctive exponent of the supernatural and terrible the world has ever seen in literature. You may search Poe through and never find such riotous imagination

as is revealed in *The Dammed Thing*, Moxon's Master and the Middle Toe of the Right Foot.

Bierce was ever a fighter, in civic life as in war.

The bitterest of all his journalistic battles was waged against Collis P. Huntington, who in 1896 was conducting a powerful lobby at Washington to pass his refunding bill, releasing him and his associates of the Central Pacific railroad from their obligations to the government. Bierce went to Washington. A newspaper man said to Huntington, "Bierce is in town."

"How much does he want?" cynically asked Huntington.

The remark was reported to Bierce.

"Please go back and tell him," said that journalist, "that my price is \$75,000,000. If when he is ready to pay I happen to be out of town he may hand it to my friend, the treasurer of the United States."

This \$75,000,000 was the amount claimed by the government from the Central Pacific.

Huntington was defeated and the money was paid into the treasury. To Bierce was given much of the credit for the successful campaign made against the greatest railroad man.—*New York Times*.

The good people of the church gave the poor children of the parish a bountiful New Year's dinner, and the delight of the youngsters was much more manifest than their table manners. One little fellow was discovered clutching a doughnut in one fist and a lump of steak in the other. He was reproved for his breach of etiquette, and took the reproach very meekly. But a moment later he turned to the diner next him and remarked regretfully: "The trouble about these here table manners is that they was invented by somebody who wasn't never really hungry!"—*San Francisco Argonaut*.

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